Three Moneths OBSERVATIONS OF THE Low-Countreyes;

Especially

HOLLAND.

CONTAINING

A brief Description of the Countrey, Customes, Religions, Manners, and Dispositions of the People.

LONDON,

Printed for *William Ley*, at PAUL'S chaine neer *Doctors Commons*. 1652.

The PRINTER to the READER.

Reader,

THough relations of those Countreys, with whom we have had long and frequent Commerce, (which supposes us knowing of things either curious or needful) may be esteemed superfluous: yet for the better understanding of these short observations, it seems very necessary: for it is supposed they were intended by the Author (whom you will find ingenious) either to please himself or delight the fancies of those that are acquainted with the fashions of the Countrey.

He renders the Hollander an ingenuous subtle people, and if he be a little too free with them in their vices, 'tis pardonable; for when he observes their vertues, he endeavours to make requitall.

To commend it were to detract; that were pity, for it is too little already; but being so, you may with more ease try whether it deserves it.

To the Reader.

To make large preambles, were not only to be unlike our Author, but to erect a great gate to a small Cottage.

It was thought deserving the Presse; I have done my part, do you but yours; that is, peruse it, and add it to your Library.

Farewell.

THREE MONETHS *Observations of the Low-Countries, especially* HOLLAND.

THey are generally a Sea-land: there is not such a marish in the world that is flat. They are an universall quagmire; epitomised, a green cheese in pickle: such an Equilibrian of earth and water, that a strong earthquake would shake them into a Chaos: they are the ingredients of a black pudding, and want only stirring, else you would have more bread then greets: then have you no way to make it serve for any thing, but to spread it under *Zona Torrida*, and so dry it for Turfes. It is an excellent place for despairing lovers; for each corner affords them Willow; but if Justice should condemn one to be hanged on any other Tree, he might live long and confident. It is the buttock of the

world, full of veines and bloud, but no bones. Had St. *Stephen* been condemned there to be ſtoned, he might have lived ſtill, for (unleſſe it be in their paved Towns) gold is more plentifull than ſtone. It is a ſingular place to fat monkies, for there are ſpiders as big as ſhrimps, and (I think) as many. You may travell the Countrey without a guide, for you cannot go out of the rode without hazard of drowning. A King that hated crowding, might have run away without ſtaying for his Uſher, for he can go no whither but his way is made before him. Had they Cities as big as their Walls, Rome were but a bauble to them. Twenty miles are nothing to be hutried over in one of their Waggons; where, if the Voer-man be ſober, you travell ſafe; But deſcending from thence you muſt have better faith then *Peter* had, or you ſink immediately, if your faith be not his: thus it hangs in the water, and at the approach of the waggon, it will ſhake as if it were ague ſtricken. The Duke D' *Alva* taxing the

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tenth penny, frighted it into a Palsy, which all the Mountebanks it had bred and had, knew not how to cure. They do some things which seem wonders; for they fish for fire in the waters, which they catch in nets, and transport to land in their boats, where they spread it smooth, as a Mercer doth his Velvet when he rooks an heir of eighteen. Thus being in a meddow, you would suppose it a cantle of green-cheese, spread over with black butter. Their ordinary Packhorses are fram'd of wood, carrying their bridles in their tailes, and their burdens in their bellies, & a strong wind & stiffe gale are the spurs that make them speedy. They dresse their meat with *aqua cœlestis*; for their water springs are not like ours, from the earth, but come to them as *Manna* to the Israelites, from heaven; the Elements here are at variance, the subtile overflow the grosser, the fire consuming the earth, and the water the waters; for they burn Turfs, and drain their grounds with Wind-mills, as if the Collick were a remedy for the Stone.

Stone. The Land they have is kept as neat as a Courtiers beard, and they have a method in mowing. It is so interveined with waters and rivers, that it is impossible to make a Common amongst them. Even the Brownists are here at a stand. The poor are never complained of for breaking of hedges; surely had the men of Gotham lived here, they would have studied some other prison for the Cuckow. Their ditches they frame as they list, and distinguish them into noecks, as my Lord Mayors Cook doth his custards, they cleanse them often, but it is as Physitians give their potions, more to catch the fish, then cast out the mud. Though their countrey be that of the main, yet every house stands as it were an Iland, and that (though a Boer dwell in it) looks as smug as a Lady new-painted. A gallants masquing suit fits not more neatly, then a thatcht cottage of many years wearing: if you find it dry, it is imbraced with vines and if lower seated, it is only a close harbor within a plump of Willows, and plea-

sant

ſant enough, as long as the dog-daies laſt; but they overpaſt, you muſt practiſe wading or ſwimming, or remain priſoner till the Spring, only a hard froſt, with the help of ſledges, may releaſe you. The Bridge to this is an outlandiſh planck, with a box of ſtones to poiſe it with, like a Quintin, which with the leaſt help, turn round like a Headſ-man, and when the maſter is over, ſtands drawne, and then he is in his Caſtle; 'tis ſure his fear that makes him ſuſpicious; therefore that he may ſee who enters, his window is ever over his door; but may be to ſhew his pedigree; for (though his Anceſtors were never known) their Armes are there, which in ſpight of the Herald, ſhall bear their atchievements with the helmet of a Baron at leaſt; marry the field perhaps ſhall be charged with baskets, to ſhew his Fathers trade pourtrayed. When you are entred, the firſt thing you ſhall encounter is a looking-gl ſſ, the next, the Veſſells marſhalld about the houſe like watchmen, all as neat, as if they were in a Ladies Cabi-

net; for (unleſſe it be themſelves) none of Gods creatures loſe any of their native beauty there. Their houſes (eſpecially in the Cities) are the beſt eye-beauties in the Countrey, and in coſt and ſightlineſſe, far exceed our Engliſh, wanting only their magnificence; Their lineings are richer too than their out-ſides, not in hangings, but Pictures, which the pooreſt there are furniſhed with: Not a Sowter but hath his toies for ornament: were the knacks of all their houſes ſet together, there were not ſuch a Bartholomew fair in Europe. Their Artiſts (for theſe are as rare as thought) for they can paint a fat-Hen in her feathers, and if you want their language, you may learn a great deale on the Signe-poſts; what they are, they ever write under them, in that only they deale plainly, and by this device, hang more honeſtly then they keep. Their roomes are but ſeverall hand-boxes, wherein you muſt either ſwallow your ſpittle, or bluſh when you ſee a Mop brought in. Their beds are no other then Land-

cabins

cabbins, high enough to need a Ladder or ſtairs; once up, you are walled in with wain-ſcot; and that is good diſcretion, to avoid the making wills every night, for once falling out will break your neck perfectly. But if you die in it, you leave your friends this comfort, that you died in clean linnen: whatſoever their eſtates be, their linnen muſt be fine; therefore from Amſterdam they have baniſht Sea-coal; and leaſt it ſhould ſoil their buildings, of which the Statelier ſort are oft ſententions, & in their fronts carry ſome conceit of the Author. Their houſes they keep cleaner than their bodies, and their bodies than their ſoules. Go to one, you ſhall find the Andirons ſhut up in Network; at a ſecond, the warming pan muffled up in Italian cut-work; at a third, the skimmer lay in Cambrick. For their propenſion to Venery, 'tis true, their women are not ſo ready at a ſpurt; for neither are they ſo generally bred to it, nor are their men ſuch linnen liters. Idleneſſe and Courtſhip have not baniſhed honeſty

thence. They tattle much, and do leſſe yet their bloud runs high, and their vein are full, which argues ſtrength; and if the Court turn them Gallants, they will take up the cuſtome of entertaining Ladies: and having once done it, I believe they will be notable: for I have heard they trade more for love than money, but 'tis for the trick, not the man: and therefore when they like the labour, they will reward the workman: otherwiſe their groſſe feeding and clowniſh education, hath ſpoiled them from being nobly minded. But I give you this on bare report, experience not having made me wiſe. They are generally boeriſh, yet may be bred Stateſmen, none of them being ſo nice of Conſcience, but they can turn out Religion, to let in Policy. Their Countrey is their God they worſhip, war their heaven, peace their hell, and the croſſe Spaniard their divell, Cuſtome is their Law, and Will their Reaſon: you may ſooner convert a Jew, than make an ordinary Dutchman yeeld to arguments that croſſe him. An old

d Fryer is ſooner turned Puritan, than Waggoner perſwaded not to bait vice in nine miles. His ſoule is compos'd of Engliſh beer, and his body of ickled herring, which renders him co-ive and teſty: theſe two with a little utter are the ingredients of a meer Dutchman, which a voyage to the Eaſt-ndies, by the heat of the Equinoctiall onſolidates. If you ſee him fat, he hath en cooped in a root-yard, and that ath blubberd him. For their conditions, hey are churliſh, and (without doubt) very ancient: for they were bred before manners were in faſhion. They ſhould make good Juſtices, for they neither reſpect perſons nor apparrell. A Boer in his butter-ſlops ſhall be equally entertain'd with a Courtier in his bravery. They are ſeldome deceived, for they truſt no body; ſo by conſequence they are better to hold a Fort than win it, yet they can do both. Truſt them you muſt if you travell; for, to call for a bill to them, is to dive into a Waſps neſt. Complement is an idleneſſe they were never

never train'd up in; and it is their happineſſe that the Court hath not ſtoln away their minds: Their being Saylors and Souldiers, hath marr'd two parts already; and if they be bathed once in Court-oyl, they are painted trap-doors, and ſhall ſuffer the Jews to build a City where Harlem-mere is, then cozen them of it. They ſhall abuſe a ſtranger for nothing, and after a few bale termes, ſcratch one another to be a Carbonadoe, as they flea Rochets. Nothing can quiet them but money and liberty, which having gotten, they abuſe both; but if you tell them ſo, you awake their fury; and you may ſooner calm the Sea, then conjure that into compaſſe again. They are all in a manner Aquatills, and therefore the Spaniards call them water-dogs. I agree not with them, yet I think they can catch a duck as ſoon. They love none but ſuch as do for them; and when their turn is ſerved neglect them. They have no friends but their kinred, which meet at every wedding-feaſt, like Tribes among themſelves. All that help them not

ot they hold Popiſh, and think it a iece of honeſty to rail againſt the King f Spain. Their ſhipping is their Babell hey boaſt of, for the glory of their Nation; it is (indeed) wonderfull, and they will have it ſo. But we may well hope, hey will never be potent by Land, leſt hey ſhew us how doggedly they can inſult where they get the maſtery. Their Navies are the ſcourge of Spain, and pills wherewith they purge the Indies. Nature hath not bred them ſo active by Land as others, but at Sea they are Water-divells, and attempt things incredible. Their Ships lie like high woods in winter, and if you view them on the North ſide, you wil freeze: for they ride ſo thick, that through them you can ſee no Sun. Saylors with them, are as common as beggers with us. They can rail, ſwear, juggle, ſteal, and be lowſie alike; but to examine the reſt, a gleek of their knaves are worth a mournevall of ours. All of them are Sea-men born, and like Frogs can live on land or Water. Not a threſher amongſt them, but can handle

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an Oar, steer a Boat, raise a mast, and ken you over the roughest passage. Their Government is Democratical, and there had need be many Rulers over such a rabble of rude ones. Tell them of a King, and they will cut your throat in earnest; the very Name imports servitude; they spite it more then a Jew doth Bacon, or a Wood-man, old-age. None among them hath any authority by inheritance, that were the way to parcell out the Countrey into Families. They are all chosen as we chose Aldermen, more for their wealth than their wit, which they so over-affect, that mijn Here shall passe the street like an old Ape, without a tail after him; and if they may be had cheap, shall daub his faced gown with a stiver worth of pick'ed herring, which himself shall carry home in a string. The common voice hath given him pre-eminence, and he loaths it, living as when he was a Boer: but, if pardon be granted for what is past, they are about to think it time to learn more civility. Their Justice is strict, if it crosse

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not policy; but rather then hinder trafick, they wil tolerate any thing. There is not such a Den of subtle foxes as Amsterdam, there you may be what beast you please, so you push not the State with your horns. It is an University of all Opinions, which grow in it confusedly, as stocks in Norway, without order or pruning. If you be not setled in your Religion, you may there try all, and at last take what you list. The Papists there must not Masse it publikely, not because ie is most hated, but because the Spaniard abridgeth the Protestant, and they had rather shew a little spleen, then not cry quittance with the Enemy. This is their warrant, which they retaliate justly; and for this reason, rather then the Dunkirks shall want hanging, Amsterdam, which hath none of her owne, will borrow a Hangman of Harlem. In their Families they are all equalls, and you have no way to find the Master and Mistris, unlesse t be in bed together; It may be those are they, otherwise Maulkin will prate as much, laugh as loud,

and sit on her tail as well as her Mistris. Had Logicians lived there first, Father and Son had not so long passed for Relatives, they are there wholly Individualls, for no demonstrance of duty or authority can distinguish them; as if they had been created together, and not successively born: the Mother bidding her Daughter good-night, and kissing her, is a punctuall blessing. Your man shall be malepertly saucy, and you must not strike him; if you do, he shall complain to the States, and have recompence. It is a dainty place to please boyes in, for the father will bargain with the school-master not to whip him, if he do, he will revenge him with his knife, and have law for it. Their apparell is civill enough, and good enough, but very uncomely, usually it hath more stuffe then shape: only womens Trinkets are commodious in Winter, but 'tis pity they have not the wit to leave them off when Summer comes. Some of their women would have good faces, if they did not marre them in the making. Men and wo-

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men are ſtarched ſo blue, that when they grow old, you would verily think you ſaw old winter ſtanding up to the neck in a barrell of blue ſtarch. The men are tolerably clad, unleſſe they encline to the Sea-faſhion, and then their ſlops yawn at the knees, as if they were about unmercifully to devoure their ſhanks. They are far from going naked, for of a whole woman, you can ſee but a piece of her face; as for her hands, they ſhew her to be a ſhrewd labourer, which you ſhall alwaies find, as it were in recompence, laden with rings, to the cracking of their fingers: and ſhe will rather want meat then a Cartrope of ſilver, hung with keys. Their gowns are fit to hide great bellies, but they make them ſhow ſo unhandſome, that men do not care to get them. Marry this you ſhall ever find to their commendations, their ſmocks are ever whiter than their skins, much cleaner, and far ſweeter. They rail at us for our various change of habit, but plead for their own more earneſtly then lay-Catholikes for their faith, which

they resolve to keep, because their Ancestors lived and died in it. For their diet, they eat much, and spend little; when they send out a fleet to the East-Indies, they live three moneths on the Offails, which here would surfeit a swine. In their houses, roots and stock-fish are staple commodities. At their feasts when they have flesh, they have the art to keep it hot, as long as our Fleet-lane cooks do incasel'd Pork. To a feast they come readily, but once set, you must have patience, for they are longer eating their meat, than we in dressing it. You conclude supper betimes, if you get away by day-break. It is a piece of good manners (if there be any) to carry away a piece of Apple-pie in your pocket; their time they spend in eating well, drinking much, and prating most.

In this progresse you have seen somewhat of their evills; now observe them. *Solomon* tells us of four things very smal, but full of wisdome; the Pismire, the Cony, the Spider, and the Grashopper, and they are all for providence. They are the

Pismires

Piſmires of the world, who having nothing but what the graſſe yeelds them, are (yet) for all proviſions become the ſtore-houſe of Chriſtendome. They are frugall to the ſaving of Egg-ſhells, and maintain for a maxime, that many an old thing mended, will laſt longer than a new. Their Cities are their mole-hills, whence their ſhips and fly-boats creep and return, laden for winter with ſtore. For dwelling in rocks they are Coneys; where have you under heaven, ſuch impregnable Fortifications, where Art beautifies Nature, and Art makes Nature invincible? Indeed herein they differ; the Coneys find rocks, and they make them; and, as if they would invert *Moſes* miracles, they raiſe them in the boſome of the waves of Bemſters land, where within theſe eighteen years ſhips furrowed the pathleſſe Ocean, the peacefull plow embowels the fruitfull earth. For war they are Grashoppers; for they goe out without Kings. There is not in Europe, ſuch a ſchool of martiall diſcipline. For Induſtry, they are Spiders, and live in the

the Palaces of Kings: None have the like intelligence, Their Marchants are this day the greatest in the Universe. What Nation is it, whereinto they have not insinuated themselves? nay, which they have not Anatomiz'd and discovered the intricate veins of it? All they do, is with such labour, as it seemes to be extracted out of their own bowells; and by them we may learn, that no rain fructifies like the dew of sweat. You would think (being with them) you were in old Israel; for there is not a begger amongst them: if he be unable, he finds an Hospitall; if he would depart, he shal have money for his Convoy; if stay, he shall have work. And, lest you should in fruitlesse mourning, their burialls end by two a clock. Even their Bedlam is a place so curiously kept, that a Lord might live in it: Their Hospitall might lodge a Lady; their Bridewell a Gentlewoman, and their common prison a rich Citizen: but, for a poor man, it is the best refuge; for, he that cast him in, must keep him there. Even their dwelling is a miracle: for, they live

live lower than the very Fish in the Lap of their floods, and incirculed in their watery camps, they seemdike the Israelites passing the Red Sea. Their Walls wall them in, and if they open their Sluces, they drown their enemies. Again, they are the Indian rats, gnawing the bowells of the Spanish Crocodiles, into which they got when they gaped to swallow them: they are the Serpents, wrethed about the legs of that Elephant his almost invincible innumerable Kingly titles; they are the Sword-fish under the Whale; they are the warre of that great Empire which increased in *Isabella*, and when *Charles* the fifth was at the full. They are the Glasse wherein Kings may see, that nothing makes a more desperate rebellion, than Prerogatives too far urged; that oppression is to heat an iron, till it burn your hand; that an extreme taxation, is to steal away the honey, till the Bees leave the hive; that their own tyranny is the greatest enemy to their estate: that a desire of being too absolute, is to presse a thorne that will prick

prick you: that to debar an eſtate of ancient priviledges, is to make a ſtreame more violent by ſtopping it; that unjuſt policy is to ſhoot (as they did at *Oſtend*) into the mouth of a charged Canon, and to have two bullets returned for one; that admonitions of a dying man are too ſerious to be neglected.

To conclude, the Countrey it ſelf, is a mounted Caſtle keeping two of the richeſt jewells in the world in it, the Queen of Bohemia, and the Princeſſe of Orange. The people are all Jews of the New Teſtament, and in fine have changed nothing but the Law for the Goſpel.

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